



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO80

Site Name: Simpsonville Stone Ruins

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s) Simpsonville Mill

Historic ☒

Brief Description:

18th, 19th & 20th century rural town or village

Unknown ☐

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude 39.1841 Longitude -76.8914

Elevation 85 m Site slope 3-60%

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 13

SCS soil & sediment code MnD,Cs

Physiographic province Eastern Piedmont

Terrestrial site ☒

Underwater site ☐

Ethnobotany profile available ☐ Maritime site ☐

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Middle Patuxent River

Saltwater

Ocean ☐

Estuary/tidal river ☐

Tidewater/marsh ☐

Spring ☐

Minimum distance to water is 0 m

Freshwater

Stream/river ☒

Swamp ☐

Lake or pond ☐

Spring ☐

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site ☐

Woodland site ☐

Archaic site ☐

MD Adena ☐

Early archaic ☐

Early woodland ☐

Middle archaic ☐

Mid. woodland ☐

Late archaic ☐

Late woodland ☐

Unknown prehistoric context ☐

Contact period site ☐

ca. 1820 - 1860 ☐

ca. 1630 - 1675 ☐

ca. 1860 - 1900 ☐

ca. 1675 - 1720 ☐

ca. 1900 - 1930 ☐

ca. 1720 - 1780 ☐

Post 1930 ☐

ca. 1780 - 1820 ☐

Unknown historic context ☐

Unknown context ☐

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American ☐

Asian American ☐

African American ☐

Unknown ☐

Anglo-American ☒

Other ☐

Hispanic ☐

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Historic

Urban/Rural? Rural ☐

Domestic

Homestead ☒

Farmstead ☐

Mansion ☒

Plantation ☐

Row/townhome ☐

Cellar ☒

Privy ☐

Industrial

Mining-related ☐

Quarry-related ☐

Mill ☒ grist,saw

Black/metalsmith ☒

Furnace/forge ☐

Other ☐

Transportation

Canal-related ☐

Road/railroad ☐

Wharf/landing ☐

Maritime-related ☐

Bridge ☐

Ford ☐

Educational

Commercial

Trading post ☐

Store ☒

Tavern/inn ☐

Military

Battlefield ☐

Fortification ☐

Encampment ☐

Townsite

Religious

Church/mtg house ☐

Ch support bldg ☐

Burial area

Cemetery ☐

Sepulchre ☐

Isolated burial ☐

Bldg or foundation ☒

Possible Structure ☒

Post-in-ground ☐

Frame-built ☐

Masonry ☒

Other structure ☐

Slave related

Non-domestic agri

Recreational

Midden/dump ☒

Artifact scatter ☒

Spring or well ☐

Unknown ☐

Other context ☐

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken ☐

Flotation samples taken ☐

Other samples taken ☐

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken ☐

Flotation samples taken ☒

Other samples taken ☐ Floral,Faunal



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO80

Site Name: Simpsonville Stone Ruins

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s) Simpsonville Mill

Historic ☒

Unknown ☐

Brief Description:

18th, 19th & 20th century rural town or village

Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types	
Clovis	<input type="text"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="text"/>
Palmer	<input type="text"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="text"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="text"/>
Le Croy	<input type="text"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="text"/>
Guilford	<input type="text"/>
Brewerton	<input type="text"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="text"/>
Koens-Crispin	<input type="text"/>
Perkiomen	<input type="text"/>
Susquehanna	<input type="text"/>
Vernon	<input type="text"/>
Piscataway	<input type="text"/>
Calvert	<input type="text"/>
Selby Bay	<input type="text"/>
Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="text"/>
Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="text"/>
Madison/Potomac	<input type="text"/>
Levanna	<input type="text"/>

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="text"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="text"/>	Shepard	<input type="text"/>	Keyser	<input type="text"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="text"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="text"/>	Townsend	<input type="text"/>	Yeocomico	<input type="text"/>
Selden Island	<input type="text"/>	Watson	<input type="text"/>	Minguannan	<input type="text"/>	Monongahela	<input type="text"/>
Accokeek	<input type="text"/>	Mockley	<input type="text"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="text"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="text"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="text"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="text"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="text"/>		
Vinette	<input type="text"/>	Page	<input type="text"/>	Moyaone	<input type="text"/>		
				Potomac Cr	<input type="text"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="text"/>	Staffordshire	<input type="text"/>	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="text"/>	Jackfield	<input type="text"/>	Tin Glazed	<input type="text"/>	English Brown	<input type="text"/>
Borderware	<input type="text"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="text"/>	Whiteware	<input type="text"/>	Eng Dry-bodie	<input type="text"/>
Buckley	<input type="text"/>	North Devon	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	Nottingham	<input type="text"/>
Creamware	<input type="text"/>	Pearlware	<input type="text"/>	Porcelain	<input type="text"/>	Rhenish	<input type="text"/>
	17		2		6	Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="text"/>

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts	
Flaked stone	<input type="text"/>
Ground stone	<input type="text"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="text"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="text"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="text"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="text"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="text"/>
Other fired clay	<input type="text"/>
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Modified faunal	<input type="text"/>
Unmod faunal	<input type="text"/>
Oyster shell	<input type="text"/>
Floral material	<input type="text"/>
Uncommon Obj.	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="text"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input type="text"/>
Midden	<input type="text"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="text"/>
Shell midden	<input type="text"/>	Ossuary	<input type="text"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="text"/>	Unknown	<input type="text"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="text"/>		
Hearth(s)	<input type="text"/>		
Lithic reduc area	<input type="text"/>		

Lithic Material

Jasper	<input type="text"/>	Fer quartzite	<input type="text"/>	Sil sandstone	<input type="text"/>
Chert	<input type="text"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="text"/>	European flint	<input type="text"/>
Rhyolite	<input type="text"/>	Ironstone	<input type="text"/>	Basalt	<input type="text"/>
Quartz	<input type="text"/>	Argilite	<input type="text"/>	Unknown	<input type="text"/>
Quartzite	<input type="text"/>	Steatite	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
		Sandstone	<input type="text"/>		

☒ Dated features present at site

Numerous features associated with diagnostic historic artifacts.

Historic Artifacts	
Pottery (all)	<input type="text"/>
Glass (all)	<input type="text"/>
Architectural	<input type="text"/>
Furniture	<input type="text"/>
Arms	<input type="text"/>
Clothing	<input type="text"/>
Personal items	<input type="text"/>
Tobacco related	<input type="text"/>
Activity item(s)	<input type="text"/>
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Faunal material	<input type="text"/>
Misc. kitchen	<input type="text"/>
Floral material	<input type="text"/>
Misc.	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

Historic Features

Const feature	<input type="text"/>	Privy/outhouse	<input type="text"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="text"/>	Unknown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="text"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="text"/>	platform	<input type="text"/>
Hearth/chimney	<input type="text"/>	Sheet midden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="text"/>	Mill raceway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="text"/>	Road/walkway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1:	<input type="text"/>	+/-	<input type="text"/>	years BP	Reliability	Sample 2:	<input type="text"/>	+/-	<input type="text"/>	years BP	Reliability	Sample 3:	<input type="text"/>	+/-	<input type="text"/>	years BP	Reliability
Sample 4:	<input type="text"/>	+/-	<input type="text"/>	years BP	Reliability	Sample 5:	<input type="text"/>	+/-	<input type="text"/>	years BP	Reliability	Sample 6:	<input type="text"/>	+/-	<input type="text"/>	years BP	Reliability
Sample 7:	<input type="text"/>	+/-	<input type="text"/>	years BP	Reliability	Sample 8:	<input type="text"/>	+/-	<input type="text"/>	years BP	Reliability	Sample 9:	<input type="text"/>	+/-	<input type="text"/>	years BP	Reliability

☐ Additional radiocarbon results available



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO80

Site Name: Simpsonville Stone Ruins

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s) Simpsonville Mill

Historic ☒

Brief Description: 18th, 19th & 20th century rural town or village

Unknown ☐

External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at MAC

☒ Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

The Simpsonville Stone Ruins (18HO80) are the remains of a late 18th to early 20th century rural milling community associated with some of the founding families of Howard County. The stone mill stands at the center of a significant cluster of small residential and commercial shops including a general store, a wheelwright shop and possible blacksmith shop. Dispersed around this cluster of commercial structures stand the remains of once-stately homes belonging to the immediate descendants of Richard Owings, a member of one of the most prominent milling families of Maryland. His grave is also located on the eastern hill overlooking the site. This general area is also documented to have been the most likely location of his mansion, which was later converted into a woolen factory. Site 18HO80 is located southwest of Columbia in Howard County, Maryland. It is situated on the north bank of the Middle Patuxent River on the slopes of the valley wall. Soils at the site are Manor very stony loam and Comus silt loam.

The first documented archeological investigations of the Simpsonville mill seat were conducted by the Upper Patuxent Archeology Group (UPAG), a local organization of avocational archeologists, in 1980. The group conducted extensive background research including archival work and interviews with longtime residents of Simpsonville. During its investigations, the group was able to obtain the account books kept by John Iglehart, the last Simpsonville miller and proprietor of the general store (Feature 4). Under the direction of a social studies teacher at a nearby high school, the group undertook archeological excavations at the reported site of the Iglehart general store. UPAG excavated a total of 71 units, most measuring approximately 1 X 1 meter. The results of UPAG's work have not been formally published, but based on an audio recording of a presentation made by UPAG, some discussion of the excavation of the general store is available in the full site report.

As part of a State Highway Administration survey of several alternate routes for Maryland Route 32 between Route 108 and Pindell School Road, a Phase I survey of the Simpsonville mill seat and several nearby areas was conducted in 1987. The field portion of this survey identified 16 features at the Simpsonville mill seat and excavated 5 shovel tests. One shovel test was excavated within an earthen platform interpreted as the former location of a store. This STP yielded ceramics, glass, cut bone, and architectural debris including mortar, window glass, and cut and wire nails. Another test, excavated at the base near the stone foundation identified as a possible sawmill (Feature 3) produced mortar, nails, an ironstone ceramic sherd, and machine-made bottle glass. Artifacts from the entire site include 6 activity items (1 polished bone die fragment, 2 possible pieces of lamp glass, 2 wire fragments, 1 metal can fragment), 82 architectural objects (3 brick fragments, 6 mortar fragments, 4 plaster fragments, 28 window glass fragments, 15 machine-cut nail fragments, 5 wire nail fragments, 21 unidentified nail fragments), 68 kitchen-related artifacts (12 machine-made bottle glass fragments, 47 other container glass fragments, 1 gray salt-glazed stoneware body sherd, 3 whiteware pieces, 1 ironstone sherd, 2 redware sherds, 2 pieces of cut bone), 22 clothing artifacts (1 porcelain button, 14 boot nails, 2 metal eyelets, 5 leather shoe parts), 1 personal item (an Ingersoll watch face), and 26 miscellaneous objects (19 unidentified metal fragments, 2 pieces of melted glass, and 5 mica pieces).

The Simpsonville mill seat was one of two sites tested in the initial survey which were then recommended for Phase II investigations to evaluate the significance of the archeological resources and determine eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Eventually site 18HO80 would also be subject to Phase III data recovery work because the site could not be avoided when road improvements were made. Extensive archival and interview research was conducted on the Simpsonville Mill as a result of these two archeological projects. What follows is a brief summary of those research findings.

The earliest recorded water-powered mill in the colony of Maryland was established at the edge of St. Mary's in 1634. During the seventeenth century, tobacco was the primary product of the colony and the number of mills increased very slowly. It was not until the 18th century that wheat growing and flour milling became important components of the colony's economy. The earliest documentary evidence of a mill in Simpsonville is Joshua Warfield's last will and testament of 1768. In that document, he bequeathed to his wife Ruth, "all plantations providing that she kept the mill in proper order". However, the location of the mill is not documented, so the mill cited in the will may be elsewhere on Warfield's property. Dr. Warfield, who had purchased a parcel of land called "Luck Supported" from John Hobbs in 1749, was the area's physician, and there is no indication in surviving documents that he participated in the milling industry. Anecdotal evidence obtained during research on the miller's house in Simpsonville (see below) suggests that the foundation of this house may date to c. 1755 and may have been the foundation of the gristmill owned by Warfield. The earliest known map showing a mill on the Middle Patuxent River is Dennis Griffith's 1795 Map of the State of Maryland. The map shows two mill sites labeled "Owings", one on the Little Patuxent to the east, and the other on the Middle Patuxent to the west. This western mill may be the Simpsonville Mill, shown near the northeast bank of the river. By 1796, Richard Owings, who married Ruth Warfield, had acquired Luck Supported and its mill seat. Thus, documentary and cartographic evidence indicate that Owings owned a mill in the late 18th century. However, none of the evidence establishes a precise location for the Warfield or Owings mill.

In 1772, the commerce of Anne Arundel County (from which Howard County was created in the mid 19th century) was transformed when the Ellicotts' mills were built on the Patapsco River. Joseph, Andrew, and John Ellicott, three Quaker brothers from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, purchased land and 4 miles of mill rights along the Patapsco River, 10 miles west of Baltimore. They thought that wheat could be produced and processed inexpensively by their milling process and would thus surpass tobacco as the major cash crop in Maryland. The Ellicott brothers were instrumental in the economic development of Howard County (new roads and ports, new technologies, new markets) and its transition from tobacco production to wheat production. The milling industry in Simpsonville also prospered and grew during the late 18th and early 19th century. The Owings mill may have been constructed in response to the growing grain market and may owe much of its early success to Richard Owings' connection with his brother Samuel, who owned the large Owings Merchant Mills northwest of Baltimore. The Simpsonville Mill's subsequent growth may have been due to the implementation of new milling technology developed by Oliver Evans. Evans patented machinery to Richard Owings which automated several processes at the mill, allowing one worker to operate the grinding process. The earliest subscribers to the Evans process were the Ellicott brothers. The use of this new technology in conjunction with Simpsonville's probable ties to the larger Owings Merchant Mills may have transformed the old Warfield mill from a small privately owned, locally based operation to one that served not only the local community but the trading market as well.

Richard Owings died in 1819, and in his will of October 17th, 1818, he bequeathed the mill and surrounding lands to his sons. Apparently, the two brothers lacked experience in running a mill as the will stipulated that Richard's older son James work at the mill until 1821 (probably to train his younger sons). At the time, the flour market was experiencing rapid fluctuations in price and demand. In a series of transactions, ownership of the mill seat, mill machinery, and water rights was transferred among Richard Owings' sons to satisfy payment of debts. Eventually, Henry H. Owings owned almost all the land that his father had originally acquired. To cope with the uncertain grain and flour market, the Owings family invested in other manufacturing businesses including a sawmill, woolen factory, and related businesses. These businesses apparently continued to function under Owings family ownership until 1852 when the mill seat was acquired by Charles Simpson. Prior to that time, Simpson may have already been using the mill for his woolen manufacturing enterprise (which was operating



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO80

Site Name: Simpsonville Stone Ruins

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s) Simpsonville Mill

Historic ☒

Brief Description:

18th, 19th & 20th century rural town or village

Unknown ☐

in the area by at least 1850). Simpsonville appears to have transitioned primarily to woolen and textile milling throughout the tenure of Charles and his brother, William, who later acquired the mill. No gristmill that can be associated with Simpsonville is listed in the 1860 census. By 1860, the Simpsonville mill may have functioned solely as a woolen factory. The change in use may have been due to economic conditions in the region at that time. It may have been more profitable to produce blankets and fabric, in anticipation of a war, than it was to grind grain for local use.

In 1865, the mill seat passed from Simpson family ownership when William Brayshaw acquired the 215-acre parcel from James Mackubin, trustee for William Simpson. An advertisement in the Ellicott City Times in 1877 described Brayshaw's holdings: "Brayshaw's farm and mill, 215 acres at Simpsonville...3-story woolen factory, gristmill and sawmill, blacksmith and wheelwright shop, store building, eight dwelling houses and a large sweitzer barn and stable for twelve horses". By 1880, however, the mill apparently ceased to function as a woolen factory, unable to compete with the much larger and more efficient mills that lined the rivers of New England. Despite changes in owners/operators and improvements to new technology, the mill was generally in decline throughout the remainder of the 19th and into the early 20th century. In the early 20th century, the mill processed wheat and corn on the first floor and made cider in the basement. After 1920, the amount of grain sold to the mill decreased substantially, and older residents report that a fire occurred at the mill in the 1920s. The mill's final decline in trade was probably due in substantial part to a widespread decline in price of agricultural products and commodities. This decline was tied to both agricultural depression that dropped prices by an average of 40% and the effects of Prohibition that resulted in less demand for grain. This price decline made it economically unfeasible to reconstruct the mill after it burned, and the mill building was vacant from the 1920s on. In 1934, the mill property was acquired by Eureka-Maryland Insurance Company after John and Mary Inglehart (the last family to operate the mill) defaulted on a mortgage for the property. The property has changed hands several times since and the mill building has fallen into ruins.

Phase II fieldwork at Simpsonville was undertaken in late 1988 and early 1989. Two hundred and thirty shovel test pits (STPs) and twenty-nine 1X1 m test units were excavated. Several additional surface and subsurface features were identified as significant or potentially significant resources. Magnetometer surveys were carried out in five areas of the site. Several anomalies were detected, many of which correlated with subsurface features found in subsequent testing. Feature 1 is the stone ruins of the mill itself. Feature 2 is the headrace that supplied water to power the mill. Feature 3 is a structural foundation, possibly a sawmill. Feature 4 is believed to be the remains of the community's general store. Feature 5 is an apparent earthen terrace. Feature 6 is a possible structural foundation and associated construction features. Feature 7 is the remains of a stable or garage. Feature 8 is a terraced platform area. Feature 9 is a concrete floodgate to control the flow of water that powered the mill. Feature 10 is a bridge abutment. Feature 11 is a possible sawmill. Feature 12 is a waste race. Feature 13 is the former alignment of an historical road that passed through the Simpsonville Site. Feature 14 is a water gate. Feature 15 is the main dam at Simpsonville. Feature 16 is a structural foundation of dressed stone. Feature 17 is also a structural foundation of unknown function. Feature 18 is a stone/cobble mill path. Feature 19 is another possible water gate. Feature 20 is a layer of dumped ash. Feature 21 is probably another portion of Feature 6. Feature 22 is a concrete lined pit. Feature 23 is the location of a wheelwright. Feature 24 is a possible rock quarry. Feature 25 is an unidentified magnetic anomaly. Features 26 and 27 are both probably components of Feature 6. Feature 28 is a probable blacksmith's shop. Feature 29 is probable fill for Feature 13. Feature 30 is the structural foundations of the Johnson House. This feature was subsequently determined to warrant its own site number and is discussed in detail in the synopsis report for 18HO211. Feature 31 is a section of cobble pavement and Feature 32 is a possible trench, both thought to be associated with the unidentified magnetic anomaly (Feature 25). Feature 33 is a historic standing structure and surrounding grounds, the Owings-Myerly House which was subsequently assigned site number 18HO210 and is discussed in its own synopsis report. Feature 34 is another waste race. Feature 35 is a wheelpit for the mill, and Feature 36 is a wheelpit and dam. Feature 37 is another possible rock quarry. Feature 38 is a set of concrete steps. Feature 39 is the miller's house. Feature 40 is the Robinson house. Feature 41 is an area of high artifact density, but uncertain function. Feature 42 is a possible tenant cabin location. Features 43 and 45 are additional areas of artifact concentration. Feature 44 is an oyster shell trash midden. Feature 46 is the Owings Cemetery which contains four historic graves. And finally, Feature 47 is the tailrace for the mill.

Summary artifact count tables and descriptions for the full site collection are not provided in the full report, but summary tables are available for several of the major features that were excavated. Thus, the artifact count tables above are minimal estimates based on the feature tables in the report. In reality, a total of 15,833 artifacts were recovered during Phase II investigations at 18HO80. Architectural debris constitutes close to 45% of the overall assemblage.

During the excavation of Feature 1, the stone ruins themselves, 33 activity items were encountered. Among them were a toy, 8 lighting objects (7 pieces of lamp glass and a lamp part), 3 pieces of iron strap, 1 metal ring, 3 garden hose pieces, 1 whetstone, 4 miscellaneous handtools, 5 machine parts, 1 mule shoe, 1 drill bit, 1 iron rod, 1 piece of wire, and 3 pieces of cut metal. Architectural artifacts include 6 pieces of window glass, 1,341 nails spikes and similar hardware, 10 pieces of miscellaneous building material, 2 brackets, and 4 fasteners. Fifty-five clothing remains were found, almost all (50) of them buttons. The rest (5) were other types of clothing fasteners. Kitchen-related artifacts from Feature 1 include 26 ceramic sherds, 279 glass bottle fragments, 2 glass jar fragments, 1 piece of table glass, 1 wine seal, and 52 miscellaneous kitchen glass shards. Only one personal object was encountered, a coin. And finally, miscellaneous objects recovered from Feature 1 were 42 unidentifiable fragments of metal and 4 pieces of undefined material.

During the excavation of Feature 6, a probable foundation, 497 activity items were encountered including 487 lighting objects (482 pieces of lamp glass, 5 lamp parts), 6 pieces of writing slate, 1 machine part, a fragment of shooting clay, and 2 pieces of oil cloth. A total of 897 architectural items were encountered in or near Feature 6. These were 511 window glass fragments, 367 nails and other hardware, 15 miscellaneous pieces of building material, and 4 pieces of roofing material. Eighteen clothing artifacts were recovered; 8 pieces of shoe leather, 5 other pieces of leather, 3 buttons and 2 grommets. Kitchen-related artifacts include 189 ceramic sherds, 349 bottles, 85 fragments of table glass, 633 other kitchen glass fragments, 2 crown caps, 7 pieces of bone, and 103 pieces of oyster shell. Among the ceramic sherds are 39 redware, 6 slipware, 25 stoneware, 6 Jackfield, 11 creamware, 2 pearlware, 95 whiteware, 2 ironstone, 1 yellowware, and 2 hard paste porcelain sherds. The only personal object encountered was a piece of mirror glass. Fifteen pieces of tobacco pipe were excavated near Feature 6. Eleven were white clay and 4 were terra cotta. Three arms-related objects, all shell casings were also found. Miscellaneous objects from Feature 6 include 132 metal fragments, 1 piece of charcoal, and 2 pieces of coal.

Artifacts reported from Feature 26, which is probably part of Feature 6, include 4 redware sherds, 5 stoneware sherds, 6 pieces of creamware, 21 fragments of whiteware, 1 piece of yellowware, 1 of ironstone, 2 free-blown bottle fragments, and a crown cap.

Feature 17, another structural foundation, revealed 2 activity items including the handle from a pair of scissors and a piece of miscellaneous hardware. The architectural assemblage consisted of 25 window glass fragments, 48 nails and spikes, and 65 pieces of building material. The only clothing item recovered was a fastener. Kitchen objects included 5 ceramic sherds, 7 bottle glass fragments, 7 other glass pieces, 2 parts from a utensil, a metal screw cap, an aluminum pop top, and a piece of bone. The only personal object recovered was a coin. Miscellaneous objects were a piece of unidentified metal and a piece of hematite.

Phase II investigations at Simpsonville completed in 1989 revealed the presence of significant, undisturbed archeological resources that were recommended



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO80

Site Name: Simpsonville Stone Ruins

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s) Simpsonville Mill

Historic ☒

Brief Description:

18th, 19th & 20th century rural town or village

Unknown ☐

eligible for the National Register as an archeological district. Archeological data recovery focused on those features of the district that will be adversely affected by construction of a two-span, steel-girder bridge over the Middle Patuxent River, associated reconstruction of two roads, and mainline construction. In addition, evaluative testing was conducted at two nearby areas to determine the presence or absence of contributing eligible resources. These two areas were identified as Feature 30 and Feature 33 during Phase II work, but were not tested. Because of their distance from the mill and their apparent nature as rural farmsteads rather than components of the mill seat, they were assigned numbers as separate, but related sites. Feature 30 was designated the Johnson Site (18HO211) and Feature 33 was designated the Owings-Myerly Site (18HO210). See the individual site synopsis reports for these two sites.

Phase III data recovery of the Simpsonville Stone Ruins site was conducted over 13 weeks between October 1992 and February 1993. One hundred seventy-six shovel test pits (STPs), 44 test and data recovery units, and five backhoe trenches were excavated, recovering a total of 32,643 artifacts. Prior to the start of Phase III investigations, large areas of the district were cleared of vegetation to facilitate photodocumentation and mapping of surface features. The Phase II grid was then reestablished in the area around the standing mill ruins (Feature 1) by correlation with surviving stakes. Soil from all excavation units was screened dry through hardware cloth and was excavated by natural strata. Within sufficiently thick strata, deposits were removed in 10 cm arbitrary levels; therefore some strata contained more than one level. All units were excavated to sterile subsoil or to natural levels where it was evident that the small number of artifacts found were intrusive. Features were excavated separately using the same procedures; additionally, 3-liter soil samples for flotation were taken from all small features encountered during excavations. Column soil samples were taken at 10 cm intervals for flotation from each machine-excavated trench. Most test and excavation unit dimensions were 1 X 1 m; in three locations, outlined below, larger units were judged more appropriate for the conditions encountered in the field. Shovel tests measured 50 cm in diameter and were excavated stratigraphically. In areas where evaluative testing was performed, systematic shovel testing was conducted at 10 m intervals along transects spaced 10 m apart where stratigraphy permitted. No testing was carried out in areas with a greater than 15 percent slope. Judgmentally placed shovel tests were also used in locations where this was deemed to be a more efficient means of testing than systematic units.

The first excavation work undertaken was an evaluative shovel testing operation. Transects 1 through 10 were assigned to the Johnson Site (18HO211), which is discussed in its own synopsis report. Transects 12 through 17 were excavated at the former location of a log cabin that probably served as a wheelwright's shop (Feature 23). A total of 9 shovel tests were excavated at the former location of the cabin and in the surrounding area. Two shovel tests were sterile. The other 8 tests yielded 43 artifacts, including clear bottle glass, pieces of ceramic sewer pipe, window glass, 2 pieces of lighting glass, 3 oyster shell fragments, 4 pieces of hard-paste porcelain, 2 pieces of redware, a piece of ironstone, several fragments of asbestos shingles, and several unidentifiable pieces of hardware. Transects 20 through 37 were laid out at the Owings-Myerly site, which was also assigned its own site number (18HO210) and has its own synopsis report. Transects 18, 19, and 39 through 47 were excavated in an area east of a cross-cutting road where a temporary traffic bypass road was to be constructed. This comprises an area of approximately 750 square meters, within and around which 26 shovel tests were excavated. None yielded cultural material. Transect numbers 11 and 38 were not used. Researchers then turned to the excavation of both features identified through the evaluative STPs and features previously identified during the Phase II excavations.

The first feature to be examined further was Feature 4, believed to be the former location of a general store northwest of the mill ruins (Feature 1). Sixteen 1 X 1 meter units were excavated in this area, including a large block of 11 contiguous units immediately northwest of the store site. UPAG (see above) had previously excavated 71 units in the area identified as the former location of the Iglehart general store (a community store which first appears on maps in 1860). Examination of the group's field records enabled the Phase III researchers to estimate the approximate locations of UPAG's excavation units. Clearing of the area prior to data recovery investigations revealed several topographic depressions corresponding to the group's excavation units. Further examination of UPAG's records indicated that the northwestern corner of the store's foundation was probably exposed during excavations. Based on the location of this northwest corner and the estimated size of the store, units 1 and 3 were excavated during data recovery in an area where the foundation was estimated to continue. No traces of an intact foundation were found. The stratigraphy in this area consisted of a thin humic horizon overlying bedrock. Most of the material recovered from these units consisted of wire nails and bottle fragments. A series of judgmental shovel tests was excavated around the location of the store to determine whether an intact foundation was present. None revealed any sign of a foundation. After further examination of the area, it was decided to place one unit (unit 5) in a slightly raised area just south of a group of large trees that suggested the presence of a buried feature. A concentration of cobbles was found in the north wall of unit 5 which suggested some type of feature. Unit 12 was then excavated immediately to the north, exposing a shallow cobble foundation. Unit 13 was excavated to the west, and slightly to the north, of unit 12. A portion of the foundation was found here also. Artifacts encountered in the vicinity of Feature 4 during data recovery work included 1,343 activity-related items, 8,554 architectural artifacts, 117 clothing objects, 3 furniture objects, 2,512 kitchen-related artifacts (including ceramics and bottle glass), 8 personal items, 398 tobacco-related products, and 66 arms objects. More detailed descriptions of these artifacts are not available, but they generally date to the early 19th to the 20th century. Documentary sources are not clear as to how early a store was in operation at the location of Feature 4. Several local informants confirmed, however, that it was indeed the site of the Iglehart store in the early 20th century.

A block of six contiguous 1 X 1 meter data recovery units was excavated at Feature 17, a stone foundation located on the bluff overlooking the mill ruins. Two 1 X 1 m units were excavated within the foundation during Phase II testing in 1989 (see above), but the results were inconclusive as to the feature's function and dates of occupation. The two most northern Phase III units were situated over the wall itself as well as partially inside the foundation. Cultural materials recovered during excavation of Feature 17 date the use of the foundation to the latter half of the 19th century to the early 20th century. One interesting architectural feature was exposed in unit 4 during excavation. A small inward extension of the foundation was uncovered, but not fully exposed. The extension could have been some type of step, or more likely, a support on which a floor joist or some other structural member rested. Artifacts encountered during the Phase III work surrounding Feature 17 include 15 activity-related items, 423 architectural objects, 6 pieces of clothing, 142 kitchen objects (including ceramics and glass containers), 2 personal objects, and 1 tobacco-related artifact. Feature 17 may correlate with a structure depicted on an 1878 Atlas map, but there is nothing on the map to indicate what function this structure may have filled. One local informant stated that it was used as a stable, but few stable related artifact were found (two horseshoes, but no harness tacks, etc.).

In the vicinity of Feature 3 (a stone foundation west of the mill ruins), two contiguous data recovery units measuring 2 m X 1½ m and 1½ m X 1½ m were placed just to the south of the foundation. The structure was identified as a possible sawmill mentioned in documents relating to the mill seat but ambiguously depicted on 19th century maps. A 1 X 1 m unit was excavated within the foundation during Phase II work in 1989 (see above), but the resulting data yielded no clear evidence of the foundation's function or temporal parameters. In one of the Phase III test units, a portion of a millstone was exposed following the removal of approximately 30 cm of loamy sand. A second millstone was uncovered just to the east of the first. These millstones were both French Burrs, fabricated from several pieces of white stone quarried near Paris, France and joined together by an iron band. The two stones were found side by side with their grinding faces up. A portion of the spindle machinery that turned the stones was found protruding from the runner (upper) stone. In addition to the mill stones, a deeply buried portion of a stone foundation was also found in the vicinity. No builder's trench was encountered and it could not be ascertained whether this foundation was part of the same building as Feature 3, or supported a separate structure. Exposure of the foundation was limited because of



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO80

Site Name: Simpsonville Stone Ruins

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s) Simpsonville Mill

Historic ☒

Brief Description:

18th, 19th & 20th century rural town or village

Unknown ☐

groundwater flooding the deep test unit and other problems. Sawmills and grist mills were often situated near each other in the 19th century, powered by the same source. Millstones were generally operated on an upper floor of a gristmill, called the stone floor. From this position, the ground meal or flour dropped through a chute by gravity to the floor below to be packaged. The millstones were probably originally situated on an upper floor of a building resting on the deeply buried stone foundation encountered during Phase III work. Because of their great weight and size, it is doubtful that the millstones were in the position found as the result of being deliberately moved by humans or by flood action. It is more likely that they fell from their original setting on an upper floor onto the surface following abandonment (and subsequent deterioration) of the building. The artifact assemblage from this portion of the site includes 47 activity items, 688 architectural objects, 35 clothing artifacts, 77 kitchen remains (including ceramics and glass containers), 2 personal items and 1 tobacco-related artifact. The chronologically diagnostic artifacts date the earliest historic use of this area of the site to the early 19th century, perhaps as early as 1820. Other deposits date between that time and the first decade of the 20th century.

A second possible sawmill was investigated in the northeast portion of a raised area between the mill's tailrace and overflow race. During initial survey work, a cluster of architectural stones (gneiss cobbles similar to those used on the Feature 1 wheelpit) was interpreted as a possible 19th century sawmill that was powered by the main mill water wheel. After clearing the site in preparation for data recovery excavations, no cluster of gneiss cobbles matching the description in the Phase I report was observed. In an effort to locate the feature, a single 1 X 1 m excavation unit was situated arbitrarily within the general area. This unit revealed nothing suggesting that a structure had once existed in this location. The artifacts recovered from the unit consisted largely of architectural material (at least 70 unidentifiable nails and 3 pieces of window glass). No temporally diagnostic items were recovered from the unit, with the exception of a wire nail recovered from the A horizon. No additional details are available regarding the artifact collection from this area. Two backhoe trenches were also excavated across the area between the wheelpit and tailrace and the overflow race to examine the relationship between deposits here and the stratigraphy found in other portions of the site. The trenches measured approximately 1 by 12 m each and were excavated to a depth of 1.5 m. In addition, a small unit measuring 1 m by 50 cm was excavated in the floor of Trench 2 to determine whether deposits revealed at the base of the profile contained cultural material. The unit was sterile, but two cobble walls were exposed at the eastern end of Trench 2 which were designated Features 35.1 and 35.2. They are likely portions of a wheelpit retaining wall. Material recovered from the stratum between the walls included a fragment of hand-painted whiteware and a piece of blue ironstone which date the stratum to the second half of the 19th century. A fragment of machine made bottle glass was also recovered, but appears to have come from a different stratum.

A Phase II magnetometer survey identified a large anomaly within the silted in overflow race at the mill. This was thought to result from the presence of water-powered milling machinery associated with the Feature 3 stone foundation. A large trench was placed across the race (Feature 12) to investigate the anomaly. During machine excavation, the broken, weathered end of a large tenoned timber was recovered from a deposit excavated from the race. At a depth of approximately 75 cm below the modern surface of the race, a portion of what appeared to be a deposit of metal machinery was exposed in the north wall of the trench. This machinery turned out to be a pitman arm; a piece of machinery commonly used in sawmills. Excavation with the backhoe was stopped at this point to try and determine whether the deposit formed an undisturbed context. Upon cleaning of the trench wall, it became evident that neither the full vertical nor horizontal extent of the deposit was exposed. Due to the number of large cobbles in the overburden above the deposit, the backhoe was then used to extend the trench to the north down to a level just above that reached by initial machine excavation. A 1 X 1½ m excavation unit was laid out adjacent to the north wall of the trench, in the area where the machinery was partially exposed. This unit was excavated through a deposit of brown silty clay loam filled with cobbles which yielded artifacts dating to the late 19th to early 20th century. At a depth of approximately 1 m below the surface of the race, the water table was reached and excavation was slowed by flooding which necessitated frequent pumping. At a depth of 1.35 m below the surface of the race, excavation exposed a portion of plank-and-timber box-like construction. The function of this feature was not ultimately determined and excavation of it had to be halted due to the continued flooding of the unit. During the final weeks of fieldwork, archeologists for the Maryland State Highway Administration arrived at the site to excavate an additional backhoe trench between the race trench and a nearby overflow gate to investigate the box feature. While they located additional wooden pilings and other objects, the function of the feature remained undetermined. Artifacts recovered from the area of the overflow race include 32 activity items, 131 architectural objects, 19 clothing items, 615 kitchen artifacts (including container glass and ceramics), 1 personal item, and 2 tobacco-related artifacts. Given the wide variety of items recovered from the deposits, and their context in an abandoned mill race, it appears that this area was used as a dump (and subsequently silted in) once the race fell into disuse and the sawmill machinery was no longer needed and discarded.

Feature 28 is located approximately 95 m southwest of the Simpsonville mill ruins (Feature 1), and was tentatively identified as a blacksmith shop depicted on 19th century maps. The location and dimensions of the feature were arbitrarily defined during 1989 test excavations of six shovel tests and a 1 X 1. While artifacts were encountered, no structural remains were encountered. Phase III work consisted of the machine excavation of a 10 X 2 m trench just to the northeast of the standing tree, within the limits assigned to the feature during Phase II work. Soil removed during excavation yielded no artifacts other than a modern spray paint can. The field crew also examined a ditch incised along the edge of a parking area southwest of the exploratory trench. This investigation produced no artifacts and no evidence of undisturbed historic deposits.

Yet another trench (Trench 4) was excavated across the tailrace at the mill. This trench flooded and its walls collapsed almost immediately after excavation, obscuring the profiles and rendering it too dangerous for further work. As a result, the trench was backfilled soon after it was opened.

And finally, a total of nine 1 X 1 meter and one 1 X 1/2 meter test units were excavated within and surrounding the ruins of the main mill structure itself (Feature 1). The stone mill is the most prominent standing feature of the Simpsonville mill seat. The building measures approximately 12.192 X 14.021 meters (40 X 46 ft) in size. The lower walls are constructed of irregularly shaped blocks of locally quarried granite, while the quoins and exterior door and window lintels are constructed of large ashlar blocks of the same material. The remaining portions of the existing walls are constructed of coursed rubble. Those wooden door lintels that remain are charred, probably as a result of the fire in the 1920s that destroyed the mill. The walls of the mill rest on bedrock within the slope of the valley of the Middle Patuxent River. The southwest wall adjoins the wheelpit and is pierced by a Roman-arched opening through which the shaft of the mill wheel passed. The floor of the mill was partially paved with concrete and stone. This floor is a later addition to the mill. More details of the mill ruins and reconstructions/descriptions of how it may have operated are provided in the full site report. Prior to excavation, burned debris and rubble from the 1920s fire (and accumulation of debris since) were cleared from the mill floor by hand. Because heavy machinery could not be used in this process due to safety restrictions, the area which could be cleared was limited. The east wall of the mill, as well as a substantial portion of the north wall collapsed inward depositing several tons of cobbles in the interior of the ruins. The aforementioned test units were then laid out and excavated (both inside and outside the ruins revealing the following artifact assemblage; 291 activity items, 10,445 architectural objects, 169 clothing artifacts, 13 furniture items, 1,051 kitchen-related artifacts (including ceramics and glass containers), 65 personal items, 34 arms artifacts, and 70 tobacco-related objects.

Data from the excavations at Simpsonville mill seat and complimentary historical data have contributed to understanding the history of Simpsonville as a rural industrial community. Chain-of-title research traced the ownership of the mill and its related resources as the mill property was divided during the 19th and 20th centuries. A construction date of 1790 has been assigned on the basis of available documentation. A 1795 map shows an Owings mill on the Middle



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18HO80

Site Name: Simpsonville Stone Ruins

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s) Simpsonville Mill

Historic ☒

Brief Description: 18th, 19th & 20th century rural town or village

Unknown ☐

Patuxent River and in 1796 Richard Owings acquired the "Luck Supported" tract and its mill seat. Archeological evidence, however, suggests an early 19th century date for the construction of the stone mill. There is no strong evidence for an 18th century date in the areas excavated during data recovery nor is there evidence to say it could not have been that early. Archeological evidence indicates the presence of a second gristmill during the middle of the 19th century (adjacent to Feature 3). This second mill may have operated during the period that woolen cloth was manufactured in Simpsonville (1820s to 1870s). The stone mill may have been converted to a textile mill, but grain continued to be ground at this second mill. Archeological evidence documents two fires at the mill. The first fire was probably in the late 19th or early 20th century. A sherd of a bottle produced from 1905 to 1912 was found resting above a layer of charred debris and embedded in the underside of a cement step added to the doorway of the mill. The cement was probably added shortly after the fire, sealing the bottle sherd beneath it. The second fire, which destroyed the mill, was in the middle or late 1920s. Further evidence for the decline in the importance of the millseat to the surrounding area is evidenced by the decline in the volume of business at the general store by the middle of the 1920s. Records indicate that frequent customers of 1917 no longer patronized the store regularly by 1924. By the late 19th century, the Midwest had become the nation's major flour producer, and only the Maryland textile mills at the fall line (with more "drop" for water powered machinery) or with access to the railroad, developed into larger mill towns. Textile operations probably failed at Simpsonville due to distance from the railroad, its location 4 miles above the fall line, and lack of local skilled labor. The low frequency of domestic artifacts at the site suggests that only a small number of workers were employed at the site. Census records augment these findings and suggest that during the latter period of the mill's operation, more unskilled and farm labor, and fewer craft specialists made up the local population compared to earlier periods. It is also apparent that the mill suffered from frequent flooding episodes. Although an appropriate natural site was chosen early on and the land was modified to suit the demands of water-powered technology, as the upstream landscape was cleared for agriculture, flooding became more problematic. Several filling episodes were evident as the mill owners apparently attempted to alter the landscape to deal with the flooding. While the Simpsonville mill adopted the latest milling technology early on in its lifespan (the Evans improvements), it may not have done so towards the end. No archeological evidence was found that the mill ever converted to the roller process (like most successful mills in the latter 19th century).

Site 18HO80 was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under numerous criteria. While some deposits at the site were impacted by the subsequent road construction, it is likely that the site still retains significant research potential regarding 19th century milling communities.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00005855, 00005856, 00005879, JPPM-NEH